

Dek Unu Magazine

Solo Exhibitions of Fine
Photoart Portfolios

February, 2018

Featured Artist

Saeed Mohammadzadeh

"Lake Urmia"

Cover Image: Space Ship
© Saeed Mohammadzadeh



Interview - Saeed Mohammadzadeh

Welcome, Saeed. Such beautiful images from such a disaster!

We swam in the lake when we were kids. Because of the high salt content it was very safe-almost impossible to drown. About three years ago, I went back to the shores of the lake with friends and saw deeply frustrating scenes of the water crisis. The lake seemed to me like a man who is dying but who cannot speak for himself or call for help. On that day I decided to take pictures of all the parts of the lake so that I could give the people of the country intact images of Lake Urmia as it disappears. My point of view is to take pictures to preserve the beauty of the lake and to protest against the damage.

Several of your images are of very large boats aground, rusting away. There must have been commercial boat traffic on the lake in the past.

Yes, at one time those ships played an important role in the movement of passengers between the two provinces of East and West Azarbaijan. With the drying of the Lake Urmia, shipping has gradually decreased from the boom times of the lake's ports and Sharifkhane, the most important and profitable port, was closed. Today, several ferries, recreational boats, and sailboats rest in different parts of the lake. There was never fishing in the lake due to high salt level, but brine shrimp, algae, and food plants still support wildlife; although, if the water is gone, salt, heavy metals, and other pollution will threaten a 500 km radius from the lake.

Your images might be called nat-geo perfect: carefully composed, in deep focus, vibrant color, and that amazing light. How do you do it?

I keep it simple. I use 35mm digital equipment, a Nikon D-810 camera body and Nikkor 14-24 mm f/2.8 wide-angle zoom. I work from a tripod and occasionally add a filter - ND1000.

What about post-production or editing? Do you use any special software or digital tools?

I keep it simple there as well. I stick to Adobe Camera Raw in Photoshop.

Your work fits well in the tradition of nature photography. Are there contemporary inspirations or influences on your work?

I've always been inspired by Iranian photographers, particularly Behrouz Al Naddaf, who lives in France. I also appreciate Steve McCurry, an American, who has unique photographic projects.

Talk about your life as an artist in Iran. Are you part of an arts interest community?

I am the Director of the Artist's Basij Photography Group and I am in charge of photography training, photo editing courses, and photography trips. And I am also the secretary of the Marand Photography Association, where we do various activities with other colleagues. I teach private courses, group courses, and workshops for photography training and photo editing.

Do you see any hope in the future for the lake?

This ecosystem has been internationally registered by UNESCO as a protected area. The Iranian Environment Organization has identified most of the lake as a national park.

The rescue of Lake Urmia was emphasized after the formation of the government of President Hassan Rouhani and the Urmia Lake Rescue Task Force was established under the management of the first vice president. Issues such as confronting the micro-organisms, the agricultural situation, and the pattern of cultivation in the area and the large number of wells have been investigated. Some experts believe that the restoration activities carried out in this period, along with popular support, have reduced the process of destruction of Lake Urmia and in some areas have improved the conditions. But, the condition of the lake remains critical.

What are your plans for the upcoming year?

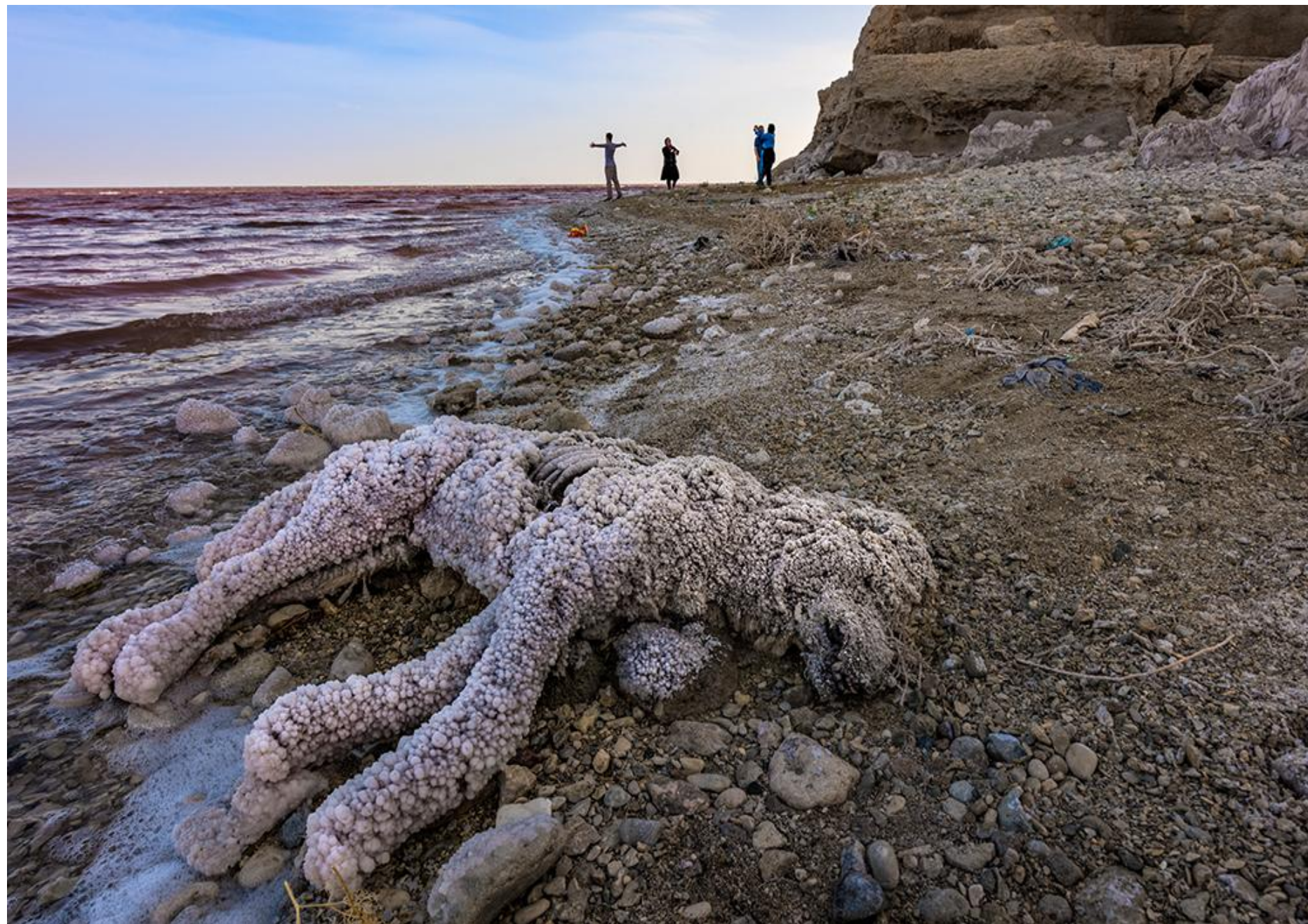
I plan to photograph the islands in Lake Urmia which may require that I stay for several days on the islands. I will also travel to Iran's deserts, places that are lifeless but that are also full of delightful forms and shades of light. Please follow my work on Instagram @saied_mohammadzadeh

























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